

A Framework for Understanding Poverty

Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

HANDOUTS

Version 2.2a



aha! Process, Inc., Highlands, TX
www.ahaprocess.com

Copyright © 2005 by aha! Process, Inc. www.ahaprocess.com
These handouts may be reproduced solely for the use of participants attending
this workshop and may not be additionally used or posted online.



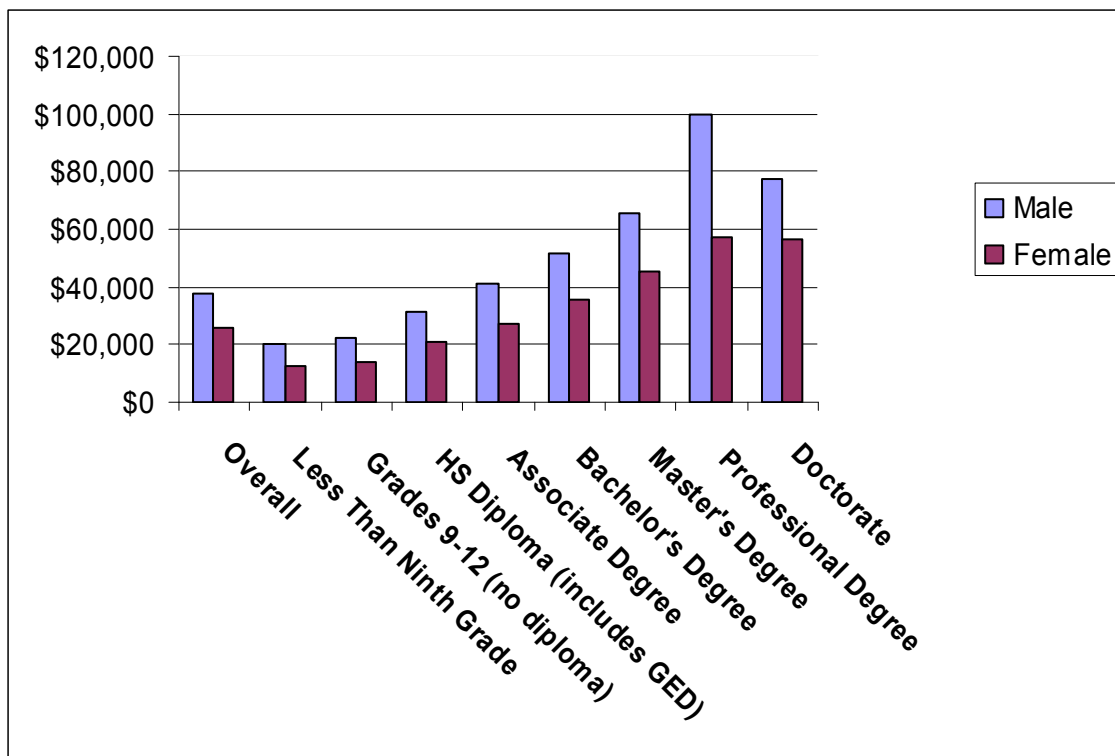
Research on Class

CAUSES OF POVERTY			
Behaviors of the Individual	Human and Social Capital in the Community	Exploitation	Political/Economic Structures
<i>Definition:</i> Research on the choices, behaviors, characteristics, and habits of people in poverty.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on the resources available to individuals, communities, and businesses.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on how people in poverty are exploited because they are in poverty.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on the economic, political, and social policies at the international, national, state, and local levels.
<i>Sample topics:</i> Dependence on welfare Morality Crime Single parenthood Breakup of families Intergenerational character traits Work ethic Racism and discrimination Commitment to achievement Spending habits Addiction, mental illness, domestic violence Planning skills Orientation to the future Language experience	<i>Sample topics:</i> Intellectual capital Social capital Availability of jobs Availability of well-paying jobs Racism and discrimination Availability and quality of education Adequate skill sets Childcare for working families Decline in neighborhoods Decline in social morality Urbanization Suburbanization of manufacturing Middle-class flight City and regional planning	<i>Sample topics:</i> Drug trade Racism and discrimination Payday lenders Sub-prime lenders Lease/purchase outlets Gambling Temp work Sweatshops Sex trade Internet scams	<i>Sample topics:</i> Globalization Equity and growth Corporate influence on legislators Declining middle class De-industrialization Job loss Decline of unions Taxation patterns Salary ratio of CEO to line worker Immigration patterns Economic disparity Racism and discrimination

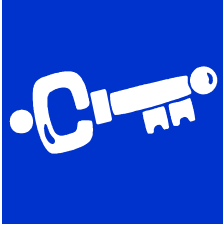
aha! Process's *Framework* training addresses the first two causes. Our *Meeting Standards* training addresses the fourth cause. There is a place for each one of us to make our contribution.

U.S. Median Income for Persons Age 25 and Older, by Sex and Educational Attainment: 2004

	Numbers of Persons with Income (in thousands)		Median Income, in 2004 Dollars	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Overall	69,324	60,528	\$37,669	\$25,809
Less Than Ninth Grade	3,250	1,624	\$20,100	\$12,541
Grades 9-12 (no diploma)	4,872	3,202	\$22,255	\$13,951
HS Diploma (includes GED)	21,572	17,646	\$31,624	\$20,928
Associate Degree	5,875	6,973	\$40,879	\$27,396
Bachelor's Degree	14,082	13,045	\$51,876	\$35,663
Master's Degree	5,107	5,200	\$65,452	\$45,149
Professional Degree	1,566	786	\$100,000	\$57,315
Doctorate	1,331	635	\$77,187	\$56,795



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



Key Points

1. Poverty is relative.
2. Poverty occurs in all races.
3. Generational and situational poverty are different.
4. This work is based on patterns. All patterns have exceptions.
5. Schools operate from middle-class norms and values.
6. Individuals bring with them the hidden rules of the class in which they were raised.
7. There are cultural differences in poverty. This study is cross-cultural and focuses on economics.
8. We must neither excuse them nor scold them. We must teach them.
9. We must teach them that there are two sets of rules.
10. To move from poverty to middle class, one must give up (for a period of time) relationships for achievement.
11. Two things that help one move out of poverty are:
 - education
 - relationships
12. Four reasons one leaves poverty are:
 - too painful to stay
 - vision or goal
 - key relationship
 - special talent/skill

Resource Scenario

Student A

Second-language immigrant student

Susan has been in the United States for two years. She is 14 years old. There was so much war in her native country that she was lucky to get out alive. She saw two of her brothers get killed. Her mother and father have come to the United States as well. Her father has a college degree in his native country, and her mother had 10 years of schooling in their country. Because of the disruption of the war, Susan had only five years of formal schooling.

She is placed in seventh grade in your classroom. She is rapidly learning English but is very quiet. She often does not do homework, and when you ask her about her homework, she will not reply. She is in danger of failing your class because she does not do the work. She has one friend, Natalie, also from her native country, who is very social but not academically motivated. Natalie tells you that Susan has bad dreams and cannot get her homework done. Natalie tells you that she and Susan will soon be marrying young men from their culture. You called the mother about Susan's school situation, but the mother did not understand your English. Susan has three younger siblings, and her mother works two jobs at minimum wage. The father drives a cab, as he is learning English.

Susan gets free lunches but rarely eats the food. She keeps her eyes down most of the time. She is a beautiful young lady, and the boys try to talk to her, but she is shy. In physical education, she will not dress out, and her parents have gotten an exception for her by bringing a note from a doctor.

What are Susan's resources? What intervention can you make to help Susan be successful?

Name	Financial resources	Emotional resources	Mental resources	Spiritual resources	Physical resources	Support systems	Relationships/role models	Knowledge of hidden rules

Resource Scenario

Student B

Urban high school

Bobby is a junior in a public high school and is an American-born citizen. His mother has a college degree and is a teacher and makes \$45,000 a year. His father has a high school diploma. They are divorced.

He wants to be a fashion designer; this is a longtime goal for him. Math has never been his strong subject. But he does OK in school with B's and C's and tries to get his homework done.

Bobby is in an urban high school, and the school is out of control. They got a new principal this year. For the last three weeks, a bomb threat has been called in every day, so the students have been released to go outside. It generally takes two hours to search the building. By that time, half the students are gone. The first month of the year was devoted to enforcing the dress code, but because so many students violated it, by the end of the first month, the administration gave up. So now students do pretty much as they wish. In many of Bobby's classes, students are yelling and screaming and don't listen to the teacher. Bobby is failing two classes. He went to one of the teachers and asked for help, and the teacher said no, I told you in class. The other class he is flunking is one in which the teacher hates kids, tells them so every day, and looks for reasons to kick students out of her class.

Bobby's mother is a single parent committed to education but does not know how she will pay for summer school so that Bobby can try again to pass the courses and get credits. Bobby says if you go to summer school the only kids who go are the ones who want to learn, and the teacher will help you. Grandmother is very supportive and has been going to mass every Saturday to pray for help. There is a younger sister with a biochemical issue.

Bobby is quiet and well-liked. He has many friends. He does not do illegal drugs, does not smoke, and rarely drinks.

Bobby goes to the counselor and asks for help. He explains that he needs the credits to graduate and that money is a problem. Earlier when he went to the counselor and asked for a transfer to different teachers, she explained she could not do that.

What are Bobby's resources? What interventions can you suggest?

Name	Financial resources	Emotional resources	Mental resources	Spiritual resources	Physical resources	Support systems	Relationships/role models	Knowledge of hidden rules

Resource Scenario

Student C

Rural elementary school

Linda lives in a rural area of the United States. There are 400 students, K-12, in her school. Linda is in second grade and lives with her grandparents most of the time. Her grandparents fought through the courts to get full-time custody but were unable to get it. Her mother is in prison, and her father is an alcoholic but a good friend of the local police chief and is employed by the chief's prominent, land-owning family. So when her father gets drunk, someone simply takes him home. One of the reasons the grandparents filed to have custody is because he takes Linda with him when he drinks.

Because of the amount of drugs her mother took during pregnancy, Linda is severely dyslexic but has a sweet personality and is determined to do well in school and plans to be a teacher. Her grandmother tutors her every day; her grandparents take her to church twice a week. Sometimes Linda will call her grandmother and tell her to come get her because her father is drunk. Her grandparents make more than \$100,000 a year.

Her learning disability makes schooling difficult for her; math is especially problematic. Furthermore, after her father has had one of his drinking bouts, it is hard for her to concentrate. It's also hard for her to have friends because the other parents won't let their children go to her house.

What are Linda's resources? What interventions would make a difference for Linda?

Name	Financial resources	Emotional resources	Mental resources	Spiritual resources	Physical resources	Support systems	Relationships/role models	Knowledge of hidden rules

Questions to Determine Interventions

RESOURCE	QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE BEST INTERVENTION
Financial	<p>Can the student afford the field trip, or is a scholarship needed for him/her?</p> <p>Can the student afford supplies for the project or science fair or ???</p> <p>Is the student hungry, or must a linkage to food be found?</p>
Emotional	<p>Can the student verbalize choices?</p> <p>Does the student have the language to mediate situations without resorting to fists?</p> <p>Can the student identify consequences?</p> <p>Is the student reactive rather than proactive?</p> <p>Is there a drug-addiction issue?</p> <p>Is there a biochemical issue?</p> <p>Can the student plan?</p>
Mental	<p>Can the student read at his/her grade level?</p> <p>Can the student identify the final product or task?</p> <p>Does the student know what will be evaluated and how?</p> <p>Does the student know the time frame?</p> <p>Does the student have the skills to do the task?</p>
Spiritual	<p>Does the student believe he/she has some control over the situation, or does he/she say there is nothing he/she can do?</p> <p>Does the student have a future story and a plan to go with it?</p>
Physical	<p>Is the student clean?</p> <p>Are the student's clothes clean?</p> <p>Can the student physically take care of himself/herself?</p> <p>Does the student know how to take care of himself/herself?</p>
Support systems	<p>Is the student the primary support system for his/her household?</p> <p>Is there enough stability in the home that the student can have a place to keep and do work?</p> <p>Is there an adult outside of school who will help the student?</p> <p>Does the parent have the time or ability to help the child?</p>
Relationships/role models	<p>Does the student have at least one adult who is nurturing and caring?</p> <p>Does the student have three or more adults that care about him/her?</p> <p>Are all of the significant relationships with peers?</p> <p>Does the student respect at least one adult?</p> <p>How does the student view authority?</p>
Knowledge of hidden rules	<p>Does the student use the "appropriate" school response to situations?</p> <p>Does the student try to be invisible?</p> <p>Is the student frequently being referred to the office?</p>

Resource	Description	Intervention
Financial	Having the money to purchase goods and services.	
Emotional	Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior.	
Mental	Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.	
Spiritual	Believing in divine purpose and guidance.	
Physical	Having physical health and mobility.	
Support systems	Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need.	
Relationships/role models	Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior.	
Knowledge of hidden rules	Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.	

Registers of Language

REGISTER	EXPLANATION
FROZEN	Language that is always the same; for example, Lord's Prayer, wedding vows, etc.
FORMAL	The standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. Has complete sentences and specific word choices.
CONSULTATIVE	Formal register when used in conversation. Discourse pattern not quite as direct as formal register.
CASUAL	Language between friends and is characterized by a 400- to 800-word vocabulary. Word choice general and not specific. Conversation dependent upon non-verbal assists. Sentence syntax often incomplete.
INTIMATE	Language between lovers or twins. Language of sexual harassment.

Adapted from Martin Joos' research by Ruby K. Payne, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*

Translating from One Register to Another

On the left-hand side of the page, write down phrases students say in your class that are in casual register. Then translate those phrases into formal register. Work with your table or a partner. An example is provided.

CASUAL	FORMAL
That sucks.	There is no longer any joy in this activity.

**To survive in poverty,
one must rely upon
non-verbal, sensory,
and reactive skills.**

**To survive in school,
one must use verbal,
abstract, and proactive
skills.**

The Paper World of Middle Class

To survive in school or at work, you have to be verbal, abstract, and proactive. You have to plan.

School and work are an abstract representational world. For each of the items listed, what does the paper represent in the sensory world? Two examples are given.

ABSTRACT ITEM	REPRESENTS
Grades	The ticket to get into college, a better job, more money
House deed	The physical property
Address	
Social Security number	
Daily to-do list	
Clock or calendar	
State assessment	
Homework	
Insurance papers	
Driver's license	
TV guide	
Photograph	
Letters in the alphabet	
Numbers	
Musical notations	
Road map	
Sonogram	
MRI	
Trust document	
Student handbook	
Teacher contract	
Menu	
Graphing calculators	

Cognitive Strategies

INPUT: Quantity and quality of data gathered

1. Use planning behaviors.
2. Focus perception on specific stimulus.
3. Control impulsivity.
4. Explore data systematically.
5. Use appropriate and accurate labels.
6. Organize space using stable systems of reference.
7. Orient data in time.
8. Identify constancies across variations.
9. Gather precise and accurate data.
10. Consider two sources of information at once.
11. Organize data (parts of a whole).
12. Visually transport data.

1. Identify and define the problem.
2. Select relevant cues.
3. Compare data.
4. Select appropriate categories of time.
5. Summarize data.
6. Project relationship of data.
7. Use logical data.
8. Test hypothesis.
9. Build inferences.
10. Make a plan using the data.
11. Use appropriate labels.
12. Use data systematically.

ELABORATION: Efficient use of data

OUTPUT: Communication of elaboration and input

1. Communicate clearly the labels and processes.
2. Visually transport data correctly.
3. Use precise and accurate language.
4. Control impulsive behavior.

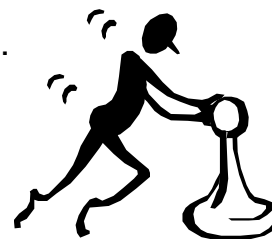
Adapted from work of Reuven Feuerstein

Could you survive in poverty?

COMPLETE THE QUIZ:

Put a check by each item you know how to do.

- _____ 1. I know which churches and sections of town have the best rummage sales.
- _____ 2. I know which rummage sales have “bag sales” and when.
- _____ 3. I know which grocery stores’ garbage bins can be accessed for thrown-away food.
- _____ 4. I know how to get someone out of jail.
- _____ 5. I know how to physically fight and defend myself physically.
- _____ 6. I know how to get a gun, even if I have a police record.
- _____ 7. I know how to keep my clothes from being stolen at the Laundromat.
- _____ 8. I know what problems to look for in a used car.
- _____ 9. I know how to live without a checking account.
- _____ 10. I know how to live without electricity and a phone.
- _____ 11. I know how to use a knife as scissors.
- _____ 12. I can entertain a group of friends with my personality and my stories.
- _____ 13. I know what to do when I don’t have money to pay the bills.
- _____ 14. I know how to move in half a day.
- _____ 15. I know how to get and use food stamps or an electronic card for benefits.
- _____ 16. I know where the free medical clinics are.
- _____ 17. I am very good at trading and bartering.
- _____ 18. I can get by without a car.



Could you survive in middle class?



COMPLETE THE QUIZ:

Put a check by each item you know how to do.

- _____ 1. I know how to get my children into Little League, piano lessons, soccer, etc.
- _____ 2. I know how to set a table properly.
- _____ 3. I know which stores are most likely to carry the clothing brands my family wears.
- _____ 4. My children know the best name brands in clothing.
- _____ 5. I know how to order in a nice restaurant.
- _____ 6. I know how to use a credit card, checking account, and savings account—and I understand an annuity. I understand term life insurance, disability insurance, and 20/80 medical insurance policy, as well as house insurance, flood insurance, and replacement insurance.
- _____ 7. I talk to my children about going to college.
- _____ 8. I know how to get one of the best interest rates on my new-car loan.
- _____ 9. I understand the difference among the principal, interest, and escrow statements on my house payment.
- _____ 10. I know how to help my children with their homework and do not hesitate to call the school if I need additional information.
- _____ 11. I know how to decorate the house for the different holidays.
- _____ 12. I know how to get a library card.
- _____ 13. I know how to use most of the tools in the garage.
- _____ 14. I repair items in my house almost immediately when they break—or know a repair service and call it.

Could you survive in wealth?

COMPLETE THE QUIZ:

Put a check by each item you know how to do.

- _____ 1. I can read a menu in French, English, and another language.
- _____ 2. I have several favorite restaurants in different countries of the world.
- _____ 3. During the holidays, I know how to hire a decorator to identify the appropriate themes and items with which to decorate the house.
- _____ 4. I know who my preferred financial advisor, legal service, designer, domestic-employment service, and hairdresser are.
- _____ 5. I have at least two residences that are staffed and maintained.
- _____ 6. I know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty from my domestic staff.
- _____ 7. I have at least two or three “screens” that keep people whom I do not wish to see away from me.
- _____ 8. I fly in my own plane or the company plane.
- _____ 9. I know how to enroll my children in the preferred private schools.
- _____ 10. I know how to host the parties that “key” people attend.
- _____ 11. I am on the boards of at least two charities.
- _____ 12. I know the hidden rules of the Junior League.
- _____ 13. I support or buy the work of a particular artist.
- _____ 14. I know how to read a corporate financial statement and analyze my own financial statements.



Voices

C
H
I
L
D

- Quit picking on me.
- You don't love me.
- You want me to leave.
- Nobody likes (loves) me.
- I hate you.
- You're ugly.
- You make me sick.
- It's your fault.
- Don't blame me.
- She, he _____ did it.
- You make me mad.
- You made me do it.



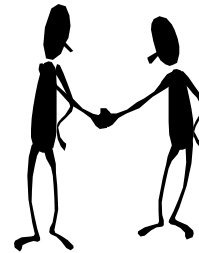
P
A
R
E
N
T



- You (shouldn't) should do that.
- It's wrong (right) to do _____.
- That's stupid, immature, out of line, ridiculous.
- Life's not fair. Get busy.
- You are good, bad, worthless, beautiful (any judgmental, evaluative comment).
- You do as I say.
- If you weren't so _____, this wouldn't happen to you.
- Why can't you be like _____?

A
D
U
L
T

- In what ways could this be resolved?
- What factors will be used to determine the effectiveness, quality of _____?
- I would like to recommend _____.
- What are choices in this situation?
- I am comfortable (uncomfortable) with _____.
- Options that could be considered are _____.
- For me to be comfortable, I need the following things to occur: _____.
- These are the consequences of that choice/action: _____.
- We agree to disagree.



Adapted from work of Eric Berne

How Do You Build a Relationship of Mutual Respect?

Students look for three things:

- Insistence
- Support
- High expectations (not unreasonable—but high)

Do you do these things? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 4 (4 being the highest).

Issue	1	2	3	4
Teacher calls students by name.				
Teacher uses courtesies (“please,” “thank you,” etc.).				
Students use courtesies with each other and with teacher.				
Teacher calls on all students.				
Teacher gets into proximity (within arm’s reach) of all students.				
Teacher gives wait time for answers.				
Teacher smiles at students.				
Classroom has a businesslike atmosphere.				
Student work/awards are displayed.				
Student bathrooms are clean.				
Grading/scoring is clear and easily understood.				
Students ask for help from teacher.				
Teacher gives specific reasons for praise.				

Workshop:
Location:
Date:
Presenter:



We welcome hearing from you. If you are interested in receiving information about our workshops, publications and product updates, please provide the following information and return to the presenter.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN BLOCK LETTERS

Participant Name

Email Address

Would you like to receive our email newsletter?

☐ Yes

☐ Not at this time, thank you.

Mailing Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Telephone Number

Fax Number

Company/Organization Name

Profession (teacher, principal, administrator, social worker, management, etc.)

Type of Organization (school, business, social service, government, etc.)

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST!